

# Teaching Assistant Responsibilities

*UCLA Department of Linguistics*

Created Fall 2018, modified Winter 2021

The responsibilities of Teaching Assistants (TAs) for the Linguistics Department, as set out in the [UCLA/UAW Student Workers Contract](#) and adapted by practice into our department, are:

1. **Communication.** TAs are expected to communicate as needed with the instructor.
  - a. TAs are expected to respond to emails from the instructor within 48 hours during the work week during their period of employment for that class.
  - b. TAs are expected to check in with the instructor before the course begins to procure any textbook and help schedule any TA meetings or their office hours (see 5a).
2. **Lecture.** TAs will be expected to attend instructors' lectures, so they can hear the instruction firsthand and advise students accordingly. An instructor may exempt a TA from this requirement under special circumstances.
  - a. TAs are also obligated to attend all TA meetings; an instructor may exempt a TA from this requirement under special circumstances.
  - b. TAs might additionally be required by the instructor to help construct course material or notes. Any of these additional requirements are, like everything else the TA is asked to do, subject to restrictions on TAs' hours (see §6), in particular, that a 50% appointment not exceed 20 hours a week on average of TA work.
3. **Section.** Teaching Assistants will be expected to lead their own section, under the supervision of the course's instructor. The TA is required to:
  - a. Conduct the section at the time and in the place assigned, and for the number of meetings designated in the syllabus.
  - b. Conduct the section for the scheduled time (usually 50 minutes).
  - c. Use the textbooks, workbooks, on-line materials (CCLE, Gradebook, MyUCLA), syllabi and calendars adopted by the instructor.
  - d. If the TA is unable to conduct section or fulfill any other responsibility due to illness or family emergency, the instructor should be notified as soon as possible. (See Appendix for details on Family and Medical Leave.)
4. **Grading.** TAs must grade the assignments and exams for each student in a timely fashion and in a way that the student can access reliably.
  - a. TAs must adhere to the policies, evaluation procedures, and grading rubrics determined by the instructor, and use whatever software (e.g. Gradebook, Turnitin) the instructor decides.
  - b. TAs should administer and promptly grade quizzes, exams, or other assignments within a week of receipt of the assignment.
  - c. TAs should participate as required during the administration of exams or tests and participate in the preparation and grading of the exams within the required time schedule.

5. **Office hours.** TAs must maintain at least one regularly scheduled office hour per week per section.
  - a. The TA's office hour schedule should be made available to the instructor before the start of the class, if possible.
  - b. The TA should also make themselves available for individual appointments, within reason, outside of their normal office hours for students who need them.
  - c. The TA will respond to emails and answer questions over email to the extent that the instructor needs them to.
  
6. **Qualifications and conduct.** TAs must be proficient in English and conduct themselves professionally and respectfully in every course-related interaction they have, and with every instructor or student they are associated with.
  - a. All non-native English-speaking TAs must pass the Test of Oral Proficiency in English (TOP) exam. This requires getting above a 6.3 score, although TAs who receive between a 6.4 and a 7.0 must take an additional ESL class, preferably before they begin TAing.
  - b. All TAs must demonstrate a willingness to help students learn, and they must address students respectfully at all times.
  - c. TAs must adhere to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's position and policy stating that sexual harassment is a form of illegal sex discrimination and a violation of the Education Amendment of 1972. Please follow the link below for the complete University Policy: <http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000385/SVSH>. Note that Definition D-6 of this policy characterizes TAs as mandatory reporters for incidents of sexual harassment and violence.
  - d. TAs can expect to be evaluated by their instructors every quarter. This evaluation will become part of their departmental personnel file, and may include the instructor's monitoring of their section or office hours.
  
7. **Our obligation to you.** TAs typically have a 50% appointment, which means that they are expected to attend classes and conduct their own research in addition to their TA responsibilities. It's therefore important to us that TAs do not exceed the allotted time they're compensated for; for 50% TAs, this means 220 hours total per quarter, which works out to roughly 20 hours per week on average (including lecture attendance, section prep, and grading). TA duties are limited to tasks relevant to the course and its administration; the course-specific expectations of a given TA will be explicitly communicated to that TA prior to the start of the course. Please keep in mind that some activities are relatively hard for an instructor to correctly estimate the amount of time it will take you to complete, so our obligation to you relies to some extent on TAs' ability and willingness to keep track of their own hours. If you feel like you cannot complete everything your instructor has asked you to complete in an average of 20 hours a week, please tell your instructor as soon as possible, so they can modify your workload accordingly. You can also discuss these things with the DGS.

Renewal of the TA's contract is not automatic. Failure to fulfill the terms of the contract may result in loss of funding.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge receipt of the Linguistics Department's "Teaching Assistant Responsibilities".

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix: Leave**

In accordance with Article 17 of the UAW contract, TAs are expected to contact their instructor and the Director of Graduate Studies to request leave as soon as the need for the leave becomes known but not less than one working day in advance of the commencement of the leave, unless the leave is for an unanticipated personal or family illness or bereavement. Requests for leave should be made in writing (including email) with information about the nature of the leave and probable duration. Depending on the circumstances, the TA might be required to provide appropriate documentation. While it is the Department's responsibility to make arrangements for coverage, the TA will assist as reasonably possible. For complete information about leaves, read Article 17 of the current ASE contract: <https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/labor/bargaining-units/bx/index.html>